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FURTHER REMARKS

The incomplete matter in claims 7 and 15, although not appearing in the copy of the specification in the files of the undersigned and believed to be a mistake on the part of the Office, has been corrected as suggested in Paper No. 10142004. Please, therefore, withdraw the objection to these claims.

As may apply to the present claims, the rejection of claims 1-3 under 35 USC 102(b) over Vitoorapakorn, US 6203090, is respectfully traversed. Vitoorapakorn does not describe nor depict ribs of two obliquely extending arrays extending substantially to an outer boundary different from that which ribs of a central array extend, as required in claim 1. By virtue of their dependence on claim 1, claims 2 and 3, in addition to having further distinguishing limitations, distinguish over Vitoorapakorn. Please, therefore, withdraw this rejection.

As may apply to the present claims, the rejection of claims 17-20 under Sec. 102(b) over Gray, US 4128271, is respectfully traversed. Gray does not describe nor depict ribs arrayed in a bank having a plurality of ribs such that in cross section the bank of the ribs includes two outer ribs, each outer rib of the bank having an outer portion that spans obliquely from a trough part of the liner into a crest member of the outer rib that it in part forms, and each outer rib of the bank having an inner portion that spans substantially upright from the trough part of the liner into the crest member of the outer rib that it in part forms, such that thus the obliquely spanning outer rib portions of the two outer ribs are on opposing outsides of the bank, as is required in claim 17, nor outer ribs of the bank having at least one intervening rib between them, the at least one intervening rib having opposing rib portions that span substantially upright from the trough part of the liner into the crest member thereof, as is required in claim 20. Claims 18 and 19 have been canceled. Please, therefore, withdraw this rejection.

As may apply to the present claims, the rejection of claims 4-15 under 35 USC 103(a) over Vitoorapakorn in view of Gray is respectfully traversed. The proposed combination does not teach nor suggest to a person of ordinary skill in the art any of the claimed embodiments under the meaning of Sec. 103(a).

Vitoorapakorn discloses a plastic bed liner retainer having a bottom with five arrays of ribs, a central front to back array, two flanking oblique rib containing arrays, and two outer arrays that border side sides of the bottom. No particular cross sectional rib structure is apparent.

Gray discloses a metal reconditioning panel for the floors of pick up truck cargo boxes and cargo vans, which includes front to rear ribs in a strictly uniformly parallel, unitary array. All of the ribs of the Gray panel are completely obliquely sided.

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Admittedly, nothing in Vitoorpakorn alone suggests an advantage for modifying a plastic bed liner to have a first, central array, and as a second part, two arrays with the ribs extending obliquely with respect to the array of the first part, one of these two obliquely extending arrays on each side of the central area, with at least some of the ribs of the two obliquely extending arrays extending substantially to a portion of the outer boundary that is different from that to which the ribs of the array of the first part extend, as required in base claim 1; or the liner of claim 1, wherein the substantially flat portion is a bottom for the liner in which a majority of the ribs in the arrays of the second part extend to side sides of the liner bottom, as required in intervening claim 2; or the liner of claim 2, wherein the substantially flat portion further comprises a front wall of the liner that is attached to the linerbottom and/or a tailgate inside surface as required in intervening claim 3. And Gray, with its uniformly parallel, unitary array of metal ribs, adds nothing to motivate the ordinary artisan to make up for these lacks in Vitoorpakorn. Thus, base and intervening claims 1-3 distinguish over the proposed combination, and by virtue of their dependence thereon, claims 4, 7, 8, 11, 12 and 15 distinguish over the proposed combination as well.

Moreover, claims 4, 8 and 12, which depend respectively on claims 1, 2 and 3, further require that at least some of the obliquely extending ribs are arrayed in a plurality of banks, each such bank having a plurality of ribs such that in cross section the bank of the obliquely extending ribs includes two outer ribs, each outer rib of the bank having an outer portion that spans obliquely from a trough part of the liner into a crest member of the outer rib that it in part forms, and each outer rib of the bank having an inner portion that spans substantially upright from the trough part of the liner into the crest member of the outer rib that it in part forms, such that thus the obliquely spanning outer rib portions of the two outer ribs are on opposing outsides of the bank. See, present FIG. 4. Nothing in either applied patent suggests an advantage to motivate the ordinary artisan to provide such a bank of ribs, nor, especially, such a configuration having such beneficial outer ribs. What is more, nothing in either applied patent suggests an advantage to motivate the ordinary artisan to further provide in such a liner as of claims 4, 8 and 12, at least one intervening rib between the outer ribs with opposing rib portions that span substantially upright from the trough part of the liner into the crest member thereof, as required by claims 7, 11 and 15.

Thus, it cannot be said that it would have been obvious to make the outer rib member parts of Vitoorpakorn to extend at an oblique angle to the top of the rib as taught by Gray to match the cross section of the truck bed to which it will be attached. In elaboration on this, note that Vitoorpakorn has a liner made of plastic, not sturdy metal as of Gray. Note, too, the liner of Vitoorpakorn matches no cross section of any truck bed known.

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The present claimed invention provides for a number of significant benefits, among which are enhanced cargo management and visual appeal, as well as increased strength and durability in the liner, and more efficient production. See, the present specification, page 2, lines 5-13, which is entitled to weight.

Finally, in fact, if Gray were combined with Vitoorapakorn the ordinary artisan would be led easily away from the present invention, for example, to a unitary, monolithic array. This is well established to constitute strong evidence of unobviousness.

Claims 5, 6, 9, 10, 13 and 14 have been canceled.

Please, therefore, withdraw this rejection.

As may apply to the present claims, especially claims 7, 11 and 15, the rejection of claim 16 under Sec. 103(a) over Vitoorapakorn in view of Wayne, US 4341412, is respectfully traversed. The proposed combination does not teach nor suggest to a person of ordinary skill in the art any claimed embodiment under the meaning of Sec. 103(a).

Vitoorapakorn has been discussed above.

Wayne discloses a truck bed liner, which like the panel of Gray, represents a unitary, parallel-ribbed monolithic array with respect to its flat areas, albeit made of thick plastic. Wayne does not disclose uprightly sided ribs, but rather, like Gray, it only shows obliquely sided ribs. Compare, Wayne, FIGS. 4-6.

As noted above, Vitoorapakorn alone, admittedly, does not suggest the subject matter of the intervening claims, and Wayne adds nothing to it that would make up for its deficiency in this regard. By virtue of their dependence on such claims, each of claims 7, 11 and 15 distinguishes over the applied art.

In addition, nothing in the proposed combination suggests in such arrayed banks of ribs outer ribs with outer obliqueness and inner uprightness, plus intervening rib(s) that are upright, as claimed in claims 7, 11 and 15. The ribs of the Wayne liner, un-arrayed as they are, moreover, do not have normal sides.

Thus, it cannot be said that it would have been obvious to make the side support members of Vitoorapakorn's ribs to extend substantially normal to the crest members of the ribs, as taught by Wayne, to provide the desired resistance to bending when subjected to heavy loads. In elaboration on this, first note that the configuration of a rib alone is not properly at issue, but the whole claimed invention, with its particular array and banks of ribs with their particular configuration, etc., is. Note too that the rib sides of the Wayne liner are not normal.

The only reference that discloses the particular arrangement

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and configuration of arrays of ribs to include banks having outer ribs with outer side obliqueness and inner side orthogonality and intervening rib(s) having both sides orthogonal as claimed is the Applicant's own invention disclosure. But to use that as if it were a prior art reference, or to attempt to find bits and pieces of the claims in the art, are mere exercises in hindsight, and are strictly forbidden.

Again, the present claimed invention provides for a number of significant benefits, among which are enhanced cargo management and visual appeal, as well as increased strength and durability in the liner, and more efficient production. See, the present specification, page 2, lines 5-13, which is entitled to weight. Such benefits are not provided by the prior art.

Finally, in fact, if Wayne were combined with Vitoorapakorn the ordinary artisan would be led easily away from the present invention, for example, to a unitary, monolithic array. This is well established to constitute strong evidence of unobviousness.

Claim 16 has been canceled.

Please, therefore, withdraw this rejection.

New claim 21 requires a liner for a bed of a vehicle, which comprises a plastic vehicle bed liner with a member having a substantially flat portion with an outer boundary that defines sides and with ribs that consist essentially of three arrays per substantially flat portion, which arrays:

in a first part are arranged in a central area in an array extending along an axis, and

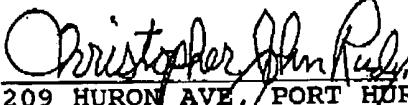
in a second part are arranged in two opposing arrays, each with the ribs extending obliquely with respect to the array of the first part and the axis, one of these two obliquely extending arrays on each side of the central area, with the ribs of the two obliquely extending arrays extending substantially to the outer boundary.

No prior art of record describes nor depicts such limitations. By virtue of their dependence on claim 21, none of claims 22-29 is described nor depicted in any prior art of record. Moreover, claims 22-29 have further limitations akin to present claims 2-4, 7, 8, 11, 12 and 15.

Thus, the present application is in condition for allowance. Yet, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned to discuss the case, or to seek authorization for an Examiner's amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

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